

REMARKS

Summary of Claim Status

Claims 1-7 are pending in the present application after entry of the present amendment. Claims 1-7 are objected to for the reasons discussed below, but are otherwise deemed allowable. Applicants thank the Examiner for this acknowledgement of patentable subject matter.

Applicants request the favorable reconsideration of the claims and withdrawal of the pending objections, in view of the present amendment and in light of the following remarks.

Objections to the Specification

The specification is objected to for the following reason:

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: Claim 1, the terms: "first circuit feature", "second circuit feature", "third circuit feature" and "fourth circuit feature" are not supported in [the] Specification.

Applicants respectfully traverse this objection. The specification already utilizes the term "circuit feature", and in a consistent manner that would be clear to those of skill in the relevant arts. Applicants respectfully refer the Examiner to paragraphs [0002], [0003], and [0007]. For example, paragraph [0002] recites:

Most semiconductor devices are built up using a number of material layers. Each layer is patterned to add or remove selected portions to form circuit features that will eventually make up a complete integrated circuit. The patterning process, known as photolithography, defines the dimensions of the circuit features.

Therefore, this objection is overcome.

Objections to the Claims

Claim 1 is objected to for the following reason:

In claim 1, page 19, lines 11-12, change "should"

to --when--, "be" to --are--. In claim 1, page 19, lines 22-23, change "should" to --when--, "be" to --are--.

Applicants have amended Claim 1 as requested by the Examiner. Please note that Claim 1 was deemed allowable prior to the present clarifying amendment. The amendments to Claim 1 merely replace the original language (e.g., "should the first and second layers be perfectly aligned..."), which is proper but less commonly used English wording, with the more conventional wording requested by the Examiner (e.g., "when the first and second layers are perfectly aligned..."). Therefore, these amendments are not narrowing and are not made for the purpose of patentability or avoiding the prior art.

Conclusion

No new matter has been introduced by any of the above amendments. All claims should be now be in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If any action other than allowance is contemplated by the Examiner, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone Applicants' agent, Lois D. Cartier, at 720-652-3733.

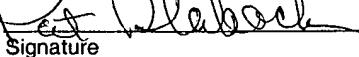
Respectfully submitted,



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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as **first class mail** in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on August 17, 2004.

Name


Signature